

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

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SUMMARY OF 308th MEETING

January 15, 1976

I. Federal Procurement Institute

Mr. Jacobson introduced Hugh E. Witt, Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget, who discussed a draft plan and interagency agreement for the establishment, sponsorship, and operation of the Federal Procurement Institute. The plan implements the Commission on Government Procurement Recommendation A-21 to establish a Federal Procurement Institute which would include undergraduate and graduate curricula, procurement research programs, executive seminar programs, and other academic programs. The executive branch has accepted this recommendation. An interagency task group chaired by the Civil Service Commission conducted a study of the recommendation and supported the establishment of a Federal Procurement Institute. A survey taken among the agencies also showed overwhelming support for such an institute.

Background

The Commission on Government Procurement (CGP) initially recommended creation of the Federal Procurement Institute (FPI) to provide special training not currently available but needed to sustain a competent Governmentwide procurement workforce. This was one of 149 recommendations issued by the CGP in 1972. In 1973, a subsequent interagency task group chaired by the Civil Service Commission recommended that the FPI be assigned certain leadership and coordinative functions in the procurement research, education and training field.

The following are the proposed FPI functions:

1. The FPI should have responsibility for identifying Government-wide procurement education and training needs and should develop comprehensive, Government-wide plans to meet these needs.
2. The FPI should collect, and disseminate to Federal agencies, information about education and training opportunities suitable to meet the needs of the Federal procurement community.
3. The FPI should assist Federal agencies in improving the evaluation of procurement education and training conducted by the agencies and should evaluate non-Federal procurement education and training programs used by Federal agencies.

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4. The FPI should centrally develop and/or administer and finance a program for the development of text books and learning materials (e.g., films, filmstrips, programmed learning materials, etc.) needed for the instruction of Federal employees in the procurement field.
5. The FPI should encourage colleges and universities to offer courses of instruction and, in some cases, degree programs, suitable to prepare people for careers in the Federal procurement field; it should also assist the schools in developing suitable programs of study.
6. The FPI should conduct, and/or sponsor, research relating to procurement policy and procedures.
7. The FPI should publish research findings and other literature and documents relating to procurement management in the Federal service.
8. The FPI should maintain a central repository and research library in the field of Federal procurement and grants.
9. The FPI should conduct short courses to prepare persons designated as instructors of Federal procurement personnel to effectively perform their duties and to help them keep abreast of new developments in the field.
10. The FPI should operate a residential, long-term (6-10 months in duration), academic-type education program modeled after the Resident Program of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; the program should be designed to prepare high-potential procurement personnel (military and civilian) for key positions in Federal procurement management.

Mr. Witt has sent a draft of an Interagency memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment, Sponsorship and Operation of the FPI and a copy of a proposed operating plan to Heads of Executive Departments and Certain Establishments dated December 16, 1975, with a requested response date of February 6, 1976.

The major provisions in the draft include:

- Formal establishment of the FPI
- Designation of the Office of the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent for the FPI
- Selection of agencies to serve in the Advisory Board: DOD, GSA, NASA, ERDA, USDA, HEW, DOT, VA, OFPP, CSC
- Proposal for an Interagency Working Committee to assist the FPI staff in implementing FPI programs
- Proposal for an FPI initial staff of 8 people: Director, Deputy

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Director, 2 secretaries, and Program Managers for Career Development, Education and Training, Research and Evaluation.

In describing the newly created Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Mr. Witt stated that the OFPP works directly for OMB, but reports directly to Congress; and has a separate budget which it receives directly from Congress. With the exception of Witt, the people assigned are career employees. They are not to be assigned any other task which does not involve procurement policy.

The functions of the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy include:

- Establishing a system of coordinated and to the extent feasible, uniform procurement regulations for the executive agencies;
- Establishing criteria and procedures for an effective and timely method of soliciting the viewpoints of interested parties in the development of procurement policies, regulations, procedures and forms;
- Monitoring and revising policies, regulations, procedures, and forms relating to reliance by the Federal Government on the private sector to provide needed property and services;
- Promoting and conducting research in procurement policies, regulations, procedures, and forms;
- Establishing a system for collecting, developing, and disseminating procurement data which takes into account the needs of the Congress, the executive branch, and the private sector;
- Recommending and promoting programs of the Civil Service Commission and extensive agencies for recruitment, training, career development, and performance evaluation of procurement personnel.

Mr. Jacobson emphasized the importance of the Federal Procurement Institute and the need for personnel directors to hear about it first hand. He noted the relatively short response time of February 6 to the draft proposal.

Messrs. Jacobson, Witt and Michael Martinez, Assistant Administrator, in responding to questions, stated that the OFPP will be the Executive Branch focal point for developing greater uniformity in the procurement policies followed by the separate Government agencies. Approximately 80,000 persons in the Federal Government are performing a procurement or procurement-related function. Among FPI's efforts will be to get a handle on what is in the system. Mr. Beck stated that agency training directors would be kept informed of future developments pertaining to the Federal Procurement Institute.

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II. Factor Evaluation System

Mr. Jacobson introduced Fred A. Kistler, Deputy Director, Bureau of Policies and Standards, who discussed CSC plans for implementing the Factor Evaluation System (FES) and for consulting with agencies on the proposed Classification Standards Advisory Board.

Mr. Kistler said that the initial set of eight draft classification standards and FES user guides will be distributed to agency headquarters in early March, for agency redistribution to field installation reviewers by April 2. He stressed the importance of getting the draft standards to the field on schedule, so that reviewers will have an opportunity to become familiar with the drafts before attending the FES training courses and before starting their analysis and review for agency comment. Agency comments will be due July 19.

Training plans call for 20 CSC regional office FES instructors to be trained in mid-March, followed by training for agency reviewers in four D.C. and eighteen field locations between April 5 and May 7. This training will be given on a nonreimbursable basis, and critiques by those attending will be analyzed in June/July to determine useful refinements in the training manual. Mr. Kistler indicated that the revised training manual for instructors, and reimbursable training for agency supervisors and employees will be available by Fall, 1976.

Mr. Kistler urged the IAG to give top-level support to the initial implementation of FES, to see that the distribution and training schedule are met and to select the best qualified personnel for the reviews, with the overall goal being careful and competent analysis of the first draft standards and of FES. CSC will closely analyze all comments and make necessary refinements in FES or changes in the standards before issuing the first final FES standards in December, 1976.

On the subject of the Classification Standards Advisory Board, Mr. Kistler said that a copy of the proposed model and a request for agency comments would be distributed within the next two weeks. He stated that a special meeting with IAG members or their representatives would be scheduled at that time to discuss the CSAB concept and provide a general focus for agency comments.